

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 1-17, 37-54, 56-59, 67, 69-70, and 74-80 are pending in the application and are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,324,541 to de l'Etraz (hereinafter "de l'Etraz") in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,003,546 to Cheah (hereinafter "Cheah"). Claims 1, 8, 37, 39, 40, 54, 67, and 70 are amended, claim 85 is new, and claims 18-36, 60-66, 71-73, and 81-84 are canceled. Support for the claim amendments and new claim 85 is found in the published application (Hamer, 20040128321) generally at paragraphs [0051] – [0053] and [0061] – [0062], and elsewhere throughout the specification, drawings, and original claims. With these changes, the applicants respectfully submit that all of the remaining claims are now in condition for allowance.

II. Applicant-Initiated Interview of September 11, 2008

During the applicant-initiated interview of September 11, 2008, and as described in the Statement of Substance submitted herewith, Examiner Daye agreed that the current understanding of de l'Etraz and Cheah, either alone or in combination, does not teach or suggest the invention recited in claims 1, 37, 54, and 67 as amended or new claim 85 and indicated that further investigation of these references and an updated search will be required. The Applicants submit the discussion below as a summary of the conclusions reached during the interview.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

A. Independent Claims 1, 37, 54, and 67

Amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67 generally recite an administration routine that generates an event action in response to detecting a change to a contact file (the event action consisting of an accept action, a review action, a submit action, and a follow up action), and sending a message that includes the event action to either an administrator or an administrator interface. A change management routine then receives and implements a response to the event action that may include approving the change by changing the common data in one or more of the firm collection and the user collection, following up on the change

with other users that include the common data in their user collections, or rejecting the change.

It is admitted in the office action at page 3 that de l'Etraz does not disclose either the administration routine or the change routine and advances Cheah for disclosing the same. However, Cheah does not teach or suggest either routine as recited in amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67. Particularly, Cheah discloses a method and system for distributing contact information over a network in a controlled manner and further discloses automatically updating previously-distributed contact information. For example, Cheah generally discloses exchanging contact information among users' machines through a server that receives a request for another user's contact information from a particular user. Cheah also generally discloses managing updates of the previously-exchanged contact information after a user modifies his or her own personal data. Upon alteration, Cheah discloses that the change is automatically propagated to the users that previously received the now-altered data. (Col. 23, lines 40-47). Cheah also discloses an "administrator application" that administers the contact information for a business entity, namely, the employees and their personal information. (Col. 29, lines 25-59). Updates to the contact information are made at the administrator machine and forwarded to a central server to be automatically distributed to all the users that previously requested the information or to notify the users of the new information. (Col. 30, lines 44-64). Thus, whether a user changes his or her personal information, or an administrator changes business information, these changes always originate at one machine to be automatically forwarded from the machine making the change to a central server for distribution.

Automatically forwarding changed personal or business information from the machine making the change to a central server for distribution as disclosed by Cheah cannot render as obvious the administration routine and the change routine recited in amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67. To contrast the disclosure of Cheah, the administration routine recited in the amended claims first detects the changed data within a user collection and generates an event action regarding the change that is included in a message to an administrator or an interface. Second, the change management routine receives a response to the event action from the administrator or interface and disposes of the event action by

approving, rejecting, or following-up on the change. The difference between the disclosure of Cheah and the recitations of amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67 is significant because Cheah does not permit the administrator to effectively monitor and manage changes to the contact information that are made by other users or on other machines. As disclosed by Cheah, whether made on a user's machine or the administrator's machine, the changed data is automatically forwarded to the server for distribution or notification without the ability to monitor or manage the changes, let alone managing changes made on different machines by different users through an administration routine's sending of an event action upon detecting a change within a user collection and a change routine's disposing of that event action in response to the message. Because neither de l'Etraz nor Cheah alone or in combination teach or suggest the recitations of amended claims 1, 37, 54, and 67, these claims, and claims 2-17, 38-53, 56-59, 69-70, 74-80, and 85 depending therefrom, are allowable.

B. Dependent Claim 85

New claim 85 depends from independent claim 1. The applicant introduces claim 85 to separately emphasize the function of the event action recited in amended claim 1 and, in particular, the accept, review, submit, and follow-up actions. Each of the actions recited in claim 85 provides an administrator the ability to closely monitor and manage changes to both the user collections and the firm collection. At least for the reasons discussed above in relation to amended claim 1, neither de l'Etraz or Cheah alone or in combination teaches or suggests the monitoring capability provided by the administration and change management routines recited in amended claim 1 and the actions recited in new claim 85. Therefore, claim 85 is allowable over de l'Etraz in view of Cheah.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendment and arguments, the applicant submits the pending application is in condition for allowance, and such action is requested at the examiner's earliest opportunity. The examiner is encouraged to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this response or the application as a whole at the telephone number indicated below. If there are any additional fees or refunds required, the Commissioner is directed to charge or debit Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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